

# When Gen. La Grippe Declares War on the U.S.A.

First a Scout Germ Lodges in Your Throat, Then if You Are Weak and Hospitable an Army Quickly Gathers, Just as It Did in the Days of the Imperial Caesar.

**B**ACK in the homespun days, when men used snuff and chewed tobacco prodigiously and indulged their convivial spirits in hard cider, a brand of humor obtained that found the ludicrous in the painful.

If a man fell down a flight of stairs after stepping on a banana peel, it was considered screamingly funny. If it was a man's mother-in-law who did the fall, it was rich. Jokes in which undertakers played prominent parts were the best.

Sickness, too, was inherently funny. If a man had a bad cold a laugh could always be brought from his stricken conversation. Comic artists of the day pictured the influenza victim wrapped in blankets and seated as close to a grate fire as the law allows, with his feet in a tub of steaming water. Beneath the cut would appear such lines as: "Sprig the sweet sprig, now blooms every thing."

Slapstick stuff. But, come to think of it, things aren't much different today. Sickness of the so-called milder sorts, such as the grip, bronchitis, mumps or the measles, is considered a good deal of a joke.

You meet Bill Jones on the street. Raw, sloppy day. Street cars creeping along, automobiles skidding, pedestrians slipping. A raw wind zips around the corner and you pull Bill Jones into a neighboring doorway, or through a swinging door, and the two of you freshen up your acquaintance.

A "Joke" on Tom.  
"Rotten weather," you opine.  
"Rotten."  
"Seen Tom Smith lately?"  
"Haven't that."  
"Where's he keeping himself?"  
"Tom's sick."  
"Don't say. Whassa matter?"  
"Grip."  
"Grip? Don't say."  
"Yep. Went to bed last Tuesday. They say he's got it bad."

"So Tom's got the grip. That's good! That's rich! Tom always kids me about being careful. He said he didn't have to watch out. Wouldn't put on his heavy coat in the cold snap came. Wouldn't wear rubbers. Then when I had that cold in November—remember that had cold I had—Tom kidded me about it. And now he has the grip. That's sure rich. Wait until I see Tom."

Of course it's barely possible, no, come to think of it, quite possible that he may not see Tom. That is, see him alive. His next glimpse of Tom may reveal that grip victim framed in a neat background of black wood and roses, with a self-confident, alert individual in a black frock coat hovering in the background, busy tipping off the pallbearers how to comport themselves when the time comes.

"It's a good joke, a fine one on Tom. Let's have another one. Just wait 'til I see Tom—I'll sure kid him about him having the grip."

As a matter of cold, sober fact, most persons do think that the grip is a good deal of a laughing matter. Painful, no doubt, like having a tooth filled. Disagreeable, surely, like paying taxes. Inconvenient, very, like rising at 5 of a frosty morning. But dangerous? Who ever heard of a man dying of the grip?

Your cocksure friend, who doesn't believe in doctors, anyway, and thinks we all would be better off and never ill would we only take an ice-cold shower on rising in the morning (but who never takes this icy horror himself—he, the cocksure friend, will tell you that grip is child's play—the burlesque of diseases. Why, he has had it every winter for the last twenty, ever since he was a short-trousered boy, in fact, and had to walk ten miles to school every morning, and, perforce, ten miles back in the evening. And when he got a touch of the grip, influenza, he called it in those days (or "influenza") his mother would load him full of quinine pills and give him a scalding, hot bath and put him to bed.

And the next morning when he had to get up, he did it, by George. And, furthermore, he milked four cows and fed the chickens, and then walked that delightful ten miles to school. Heroic treatment was what did it. People are too soft nowadays, and pay too much attention to little ailments.

The General Does the Hearing.

Yes, perhaps we are a soft and degenerate race. No longer can we live on salt pork and

mustard, or if you don't like salt pork, mustard by itself. No longer can we hike those ten miles to school, truly a most unroyal road to learning. And no longer can we take Gen. La Grippe, when he pays us an unwelcome visit, as most of his visits are, and leave him unceremoniously out the window.

As a matter of fact it is the general who does the heaving. For, homespun philosophers to the contrary notwithstanding, Gen. La Grippe is a most formidable foe.

Grip a joke? A most grisly one. Recently Philadelphia had 947 deaths in a week. This was the highest death rate in the Quaker City, for a similar period, in the last fifteen years. And of these deaths about ninety were laid directly to grip; about 170 to pneumonia, and about 120 to broncho-pneumonia. Of the last named 290 deaths physicians say it is fair to assume that Gen. La Grippe can be indicted for complicity in at least 80 per cent of the cases.

Grip funny? Very. Chicago is in the clutches of a grip epidemic now that is killing its hundreds every week. St. Louis had its grip epidemic several weeks ago, and may have another, and several others, before the hot weather sets in. And these cities are not suffering from isolated cases of attack. It is a general offensive all along the eastern and the western and the northern fronts. The armies of bacilli are sweeping over the prairies of Kansas and the Dakotas, the fertile farms of Indiana; the populous cities of Massachusetts. The invasion is on. Gen. La Grippe is waging war on the United States!

Everybody Has the Grip.

Perhaps the reason that you and Tom and Bill Jones think grip is a joke is because you have not realized the menace of the disease. Grip is so closely allied with a mere bad cold, both in your mind and in fact, that it cannot seem dangerous to you. Also, your familiarity with grip breeds contempt. Everybody has the grip. These invasions of the general are frequent. Besides the epidemic of our winter of 1915-1916 there were severe epidemics in 1702, 1782, 1787, 1803, 1833, 1837, 1847 and 1850. The epidemic of 1850-1850 was, perhaps, the severest.

So this invasion of the United States by Gen. La Grippe is but periodical, as are all wars and all the visitations of trouble that our human flesh is heir to. Perhaps that is what makes us scornful of it.

And what is the grip? And how does the general marshal his forces? And how does he attack and whom and when?

Romans Had It.

To go back a little: Dabblers in the annals of medicine have tried to track the general to his lair, to find out his origin. They have burrowed back through the dusty pages of time to find that the general still eludes them. Certain it is that the old Greeks and Romans suffered from the influenza. Small wonder, that. What with their bare legs and scant togas and insufficient mantles, artistic, doubtless, but blameworthy, they were a fair prey to the general. Those centurions of proud Rome who speared Huns nonchalantly and mopped up the earth with the Belgae, succumbed to the onslaughts of Gen. La Grippe.

It is discouraging to picture this, but true. To picture Caesar, noble, dignified, haughty, imperial Caesar, with a bad cold, and, perhaps, temporarily and unfortunately, without a pocket handkerchief, is nothing less than a joke. It must destroy our illusions of the classic Athenians to imagine one of them wrapped in blankets and sipping a hot toddy. It's like clothing Appollo Belvedere in a fur-lined overcoat. Incongruous, barely practical.

Yet, shatter our illusions as it will, the truth remains that the ancients had bad colds and the grip. Horace, in one of his odes, tells in a familiar way of having the influenza. Various and sundry Roman emperors had it. And often the cure was worse than the disease, for the ancient physicians believed in it. Plied in bleeding, pinned all their faith in it. And though a patient were weak enough, unassisted, to succumb without a struggle to a husky kitten, the doctor nevertheless would open a vein and further subtract from his sum of vitality.



It is the rush hour and a mass of humanity is jammed into the seats and packed in the aisles. At every crossing the car stops jerkily and waits for a minute while more shivering humanity climbs in and further packs the aisles. The door is closed most of the time except when it is opened to admit passengers and with them a breath of damp, chill air.

Damp, chill air is what the privates in the army of Gen. La Grippe do not like. Damp air is the best sort of air for them. Into the car on one of the blasts rides a scout germ and finds lodgment in your throat. He sticks around awhile, eager to take advantage of the

You may go to work that day and in the office or in the street car be joined by more of the scout germs. There is quite a merry little party of you, now. Only, the germs are enjoying it more than you are. And then when you get home that night you realize that you feel—horrible! Movies tonight? Not much. Me for the 111 old hay. Feel bum!

You climb in and every bone aches separately and completely. Your fever goes up to 104, perhaps 104. Your chest hurts and when you cough, which is frequently, every rib protests. You have the grip, man! The general has marked you for his own. That's how he marshals his forces.

It seems logical to presume that this is precisely the sort of weather that Gen. La Grippe finds suited to an invasion. Give him a day or two of brisk, snappy cold and you balk him. Give him dry heat and his hosts are turned back.

And now in this winter of 1915-16, while the forces of grip are still rampant in our land, physicians and health authorities are uniting to repel the invasion and put in force such a program of preparedness that future invasions will be made impossible.

Wounds, but Seldom Kills.

There is an awfully lot of comfort in this for you and for me. It's had enough to know that we and Bill Jones and Tom Smith are pretty likely to get the disease at some time during a damp winter, but how much worse would it be if means of combating the grip were ineffectual?

No, the general may attack vigorously and all along the line, but he doesn't use poisonous gas or dum-dum bullets. He wounds but he doesn't often kill.

This may sound contradictory, when increased death rates are recollected. But it must be remembered that increased deaths are due to the fact that so many persons get the grip. Of the many that get it only a small percentage die. But even this small percentage is large, in numbers.

Still, you and I don't like to think that we'll even be wounded. It's so much safer to avoid the grip altogether.

Do so. Not by your old-fashioned, homespun remedies or preventives, but by following the rules that doctors who have studied the grip's methods find to be best.

Dr. Starckhoff, health commissioner of St. Louis, gives the following rules:

1. Avoid kissing. (Hard, but sensible. Be firm, yield not. Think of the grip germs when you are about to grab her, and weigh them well—the kiss and the germ. 'May the best man win!')
2. Walk one mile in the open air twice daily and you will not only avoid the grip, but will add ten years to your life as well.
3. Try to avoid riding in crowded cars.
4. Avoid large assemblies of people and poorly ventilated rooms.
5. Leave whisky alone, not because it causes the grip, but because it weakens your resisting power.
6. Become a fresh-air fiend.

The Fatal Mistake.

Dr. Clarence W. Westerman has a great respect for the grip, not only for its own characteristics, but because it so readily leads to pneumonia, which he considers possibly the most dangerous of diseases.

Dr. Westerman is a firm believer in fresh air, fresh cold air, as a preventive and even a cure for grip. He says that often a brisk walk of a mile or so on a cold, frosty morning will completely cure one who has been suffering from a mild attack of grip.

Dr. Westerman finds that the disease does not always mark its victims lightly, but rather often lays a heavy hand on them. He has known frequent cases in which the effects of the grip, general lassitude, weakness, lack of "pep," lasted for fully three months after the patient was pronounced cured.

The Journal of the American Medical Association has the following to advise concerning the treatment of grip:

"It is often difficult to convince the patient that he should exercise special care in avoiding further exposure. A day or two at home, with rest and the usual remedies applied to a cold, will often be all that is necessary for a rapid convalescence. A few days' care may prevent a long illness. Those more severely afflicted with fever, chill, aching bones and cough are more easily persuaded to remain indoors. When there is marked prostration or fever, rest in bed should be enforced. Even though the infection is not severe enough to cause alarm, it leaves the body weakened and an easier prey to pneumonia, which has been prevalent during recent months.

"Anything which makes the patient warm improves his condition. He may be given hot malted milk, hot tea or hot lemonade, at more or less frequent intervals. The patient may be given a hot tub bath and then put into a warm bed in a warm room as an efficient means of making him comfortable. Hot-water bags at the feet and extra coverings to the bed are often needed.

"Whenever the course of the disease is prolonged or recurrence of symptoms of infection are noted, a painstaking search will often be rewarded by the discovery of some unsuspected complication, which may be relieved by appropriate treatment."

There is some balm in Gilead, then. Just because Gen. La Grippe aims an assault at you it does not necessarily follow that you are marked for slaughter.

You may meet the general's attack a dozen times and survive them triumphantly. You may beat back his invasion, you may escape being touched by him.

And forget the homespun remedies. Fight a scientific fight. Arm yourself with a thermometer and have plenty of quinine pills in the magazine of your medicine gun. For Gen. La Grippe is even now invading the United States and it's going to be a very pretty fight to get him out.

One Time It Was a Mystery.

Down through the middle ages marched Gen. La Grippe. His coming was clothed by the romantic men of the middle ages with a tinge of the mysterious. The Italians, in the seventeenth century, doped it out that the attacks of the dread disease were due to peculiar configurations and arrangements of the stars. The influence of the heavenly planets was thought to be responsible for the grip. Thus the disease came to be known as the "influence," or, in the Italian, the "influenza."

Gen. La Grippe seems to have started all of his forced marches from Asia and then to have proceeded across Europe in a westerly or northwesterly direction and finally into the United States by way of Newfoundland. In all his marches he has accomplished his grim purpose—to swell the death rate enormously. In some epidemics the disease has spread through all of Europe within six weeks. Wherever it has appeared the whole community has suffered to a greater or less extent, irrespective of age or condition of life.

The general does not always observe the professional courtesies—the niceties due from one commander to another. He is not gallant. For at times Gen. La Grippe will turn admiral and attack fleets at sea, away from all communication with the land and to such an extent as to disable them temporarily for service.

This happened in 1782 in the case of the squadron of Admiral Kempenfelt, which had to return to England from the coast of France in consequence of a severe epidemic of influenza, or grip, attacking his crews. At about the same time the squadron of Lord Anson, off the coast of Holland, suffered extensively from a similar outbreak. Many instances of a like kind have been recorded.

Now what is the grip? Ask your physician and he will tell you that it is a disease that first attacks the mucous membrane of the throat and nose.

What does the attacking, you want to know. A germ, he will tell you, first isolated and described by Pfeiffer and named by him Bacillus Influenzae. Pfeiffer, your physician will tell you, laid all the blame at the door of this germ. The bacillus had been found in a number of cases. Circumstantial evidence—strong evidence. Let's indict bacillus Influenzae.

Germs Dote on Damp Air.

But ask another physician. He will tell you that while this germ is found in many cases of grip, nevertheless there are often other organisms, partners in crime, associated with it in the work of making the grip patient feel that life isn't worth living. In fact bacillus Influenzae grows much better and does much bet-

ter work, if you can call it better work, when allied with other villainous germs.

A third doctor may tell you that it is a streptococcus that is the real mischief-maker; that it prepares the ground for the bacillus influenzae and then R. I. comes along and does the dirty work. In other words, streptococcus digs the trenches for Gen. La Grippe and R. I. brings up the machine guns and mows down you and me.

And how does Gen. La Grippe marshal his forces?

First, cautiously. The general believes in scouts, plenty of them. So that, some day, when you are riding home in a crowded street car, one of the scouts can grab you.

slightest hospitality shown him.

More Scouts Join.

If you are out of sorts, run down, you are hospitable. Your "opsonic index" is low, which means that your resisting power to disease is weakened. In this condition the scout germ finds you a fine prospect. He nestles down for the season. He—or she—raises a family.

And then, several days after that memorable car ride, although perhaps you thought it far from memorable and very stupid at the time, you note that you feel bad. Your nose and throat are sore. The bronchial tubes and the larynx are dry and irritated. You have a dry, harassing, unproductive cough.